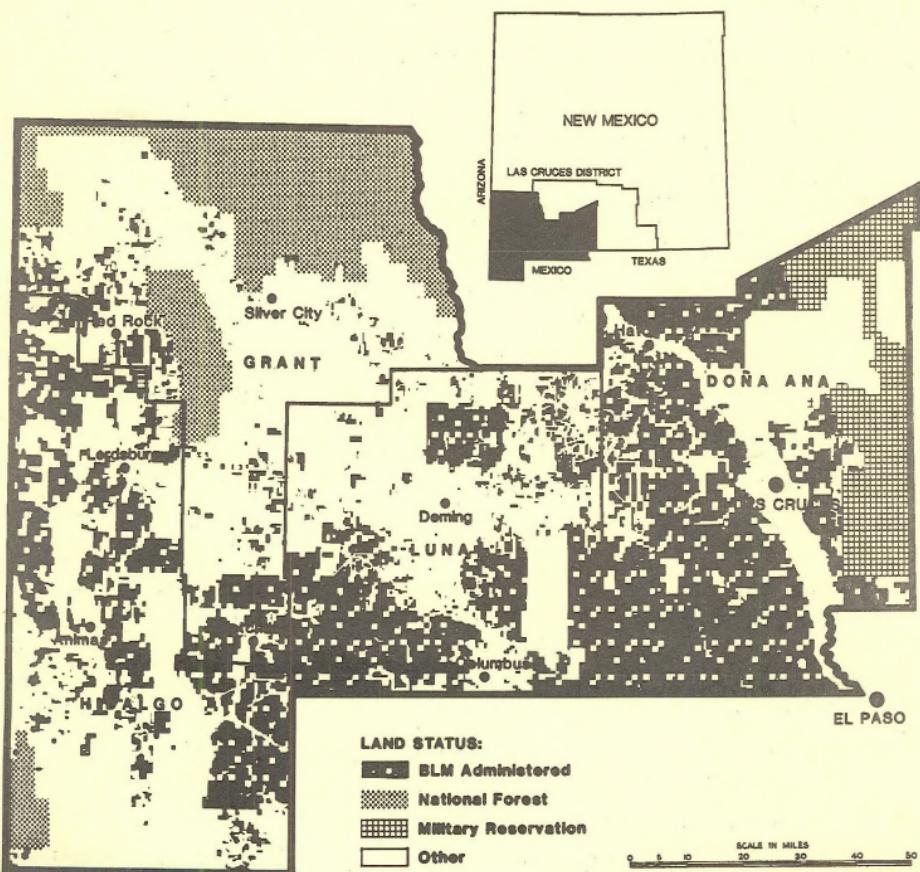


# LAS CRUCES/LORDSBURG RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
LAS CRUCES DISTRICT, NEW MEXICO

## BOOKLET II





RECEIVED

JUL 15 1981

OFFICE OF DOM. GEOTHERMAL  
CONSERVATION DIVISION  
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA

## BOOKLET II

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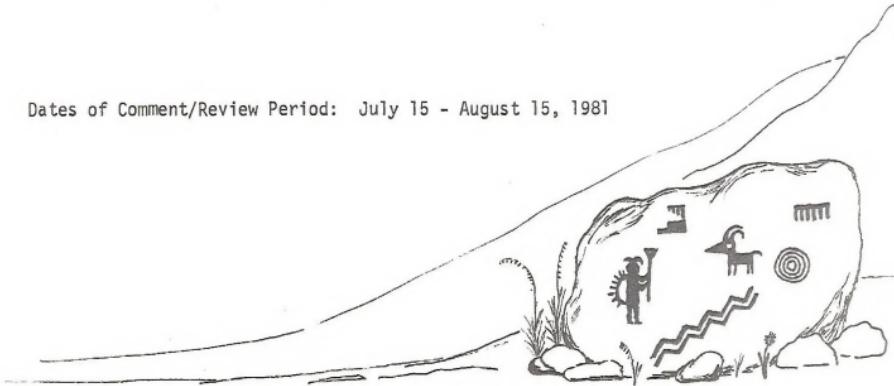
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Dates of Comment/Review Period: July 15 - August 15, 1981





## INTRODUCTION

The second booklet for the Las Cruces/Lordsburg Resource Management Plan contains our responses to your many letters, forms and phone calls which were received during the April 1981 comment period. These are now the proposed final Issues and Planning Criteria presented for your comments before formal approval. We thank you for the time and effort you put into your well thought out and detailed comments. We hope you will continue to give us your ideas, advice and questions. The final plan will be the better for it!

### Your Involvement

Several people commented on the Federal regulation (43 CFR 1601.6-1(d)) which states that protests to an approved RMP may only be raised by those persons who participated in the planning process and only concerning the specific issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process.

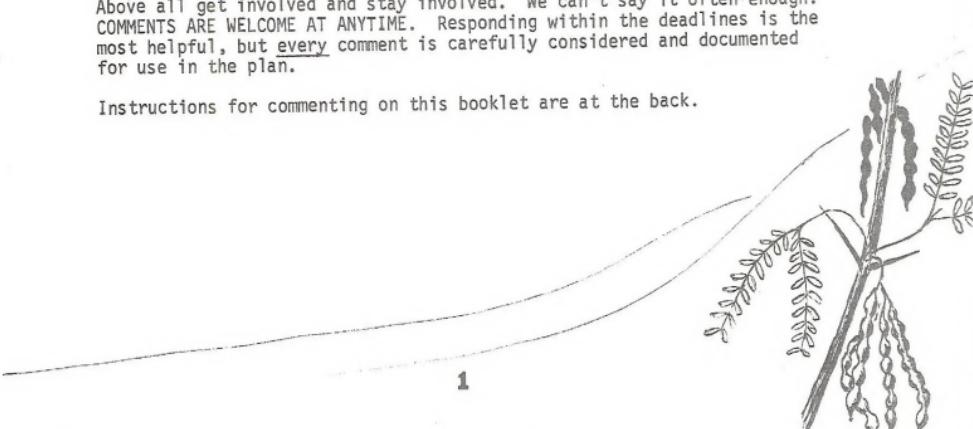
We cannot stress strongly enough that we want you to join us at the ground level of the plan to ensure that your ideas are incorporated early on. Your participation can start at any time; it doesn't have to be at the beginning. With this in mind, there are at least four times remaining where we are specifically required to ask for public comments:

1. upon publication of this booklet
2. upon publication of the draft EIS in 1983
3. upon publication of the final EIS in 1984
4. upon significant change made as a result of a formal protest

By working together throughout the process, we should be able to arrive at decisions that reflect what the people want to do with public lands in the area.

Above all get involved and stay involved. We can't say it often enough: COMMENTS ARE WELCOME AT ANYTIME. Responding within the deadlines is the most helpful, but every comment is carefully considered and documented for use in the plan.

Instructions for commenting on this booklet are at the back.

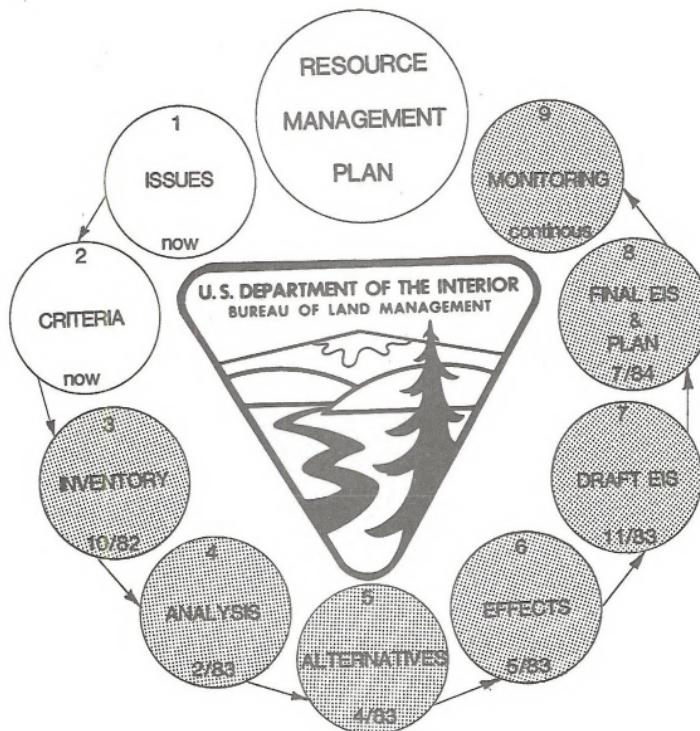


## Schedule Of Public Involvement

<u>Public Involvement</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Approximate Dates</u>
Invitation for comment on Issues and Planning Criteria	Booklet (I) & Workshops	Completed April 30, 1981
Invitation for comment on Proposed Final Issues and Planning Criteria	Booklet (II)	July 15, 1981 through August 15, 1981
Notification of Approved Issues and Criteria	Letter	October, 1981
Involvement solicited for Information Collection and Inventory	Letters, field trips, small group presentations	Now through October, 1982
To coordinate the analysis of information collected	Letters, one-to-one communication, small group presentations	October, 1981 through February, 1983
Suggestions requested to determine the scope of the planning alternatives	Booklet, workshops, meetings	July, 1982
Suggestions requested to estimate the effects of the various alternatives on the environment and in selecting a preferred alternative	Letters, public meetings, one-to-one communication	April, 1983
Hearings on the adequacy and accuracy of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement	Mass mailings, letters, formal hearings	November, 1983
Hearings on the adequacy and accuracy of the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Decision on the Resource Management Plan	Letters and formal hearings	July, 1984
Notification of the Final Decision on the Resource Management Plan	Mass mailings	September, 1984

## Where We Are In The Process

We are still in the early stages of preparing the plan. In fact, if you look at this familiar diagram, you can see that we are working up the first two steps. Public participation will be necessary every step of the way.



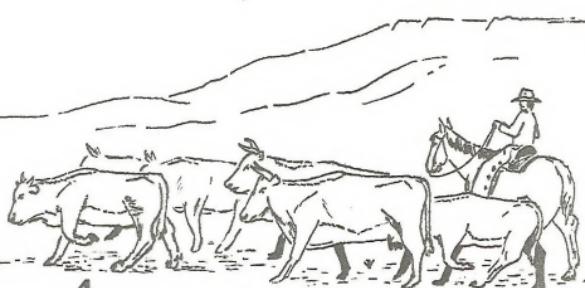
## What You Told Us To Change

The content and format of the first booklet received considerable comment. What people had to say ranged from general to specific; from emphasis on protection of resources to emphasis on production. We heard from national clubs and local organizations--from small businesses and large corporations. Federal agencies voiced their opinions as did units of local government. In addition, we received an overwhelming response from genuinely interested individuals. Generally, persons commenting agreed that the six topics we suggested are important and controversial matters with a variety of solutions. In addition, respondents generally approved of the standards for guiding and evaluating pieces of the plan. However, they certainly didn't agree with everything we said.

One item heard loud and clear was the lack of any mention of cultural resources in the area. Supporting reasons to focus more attention on this area's archaeological and historical treasures are: BLM's policy of protecting cultural resources, their educational and historical importance, as well as their high aesthetic, scientific, and economic value. It was pointed out that the remains of earlier cultures are an irreplaceable, non-renewable resource distributed area-wide. Therefore, the plan will consider how cultural resources may be affected by surface disturbances connected with any of the issues.

Several members of the public were concerned about the protection of site-specific areas. Specially tailored management practices may be needed for areas of more than local interest or special worth. In some cases, a formal designation may be used to protect or enhance the values involved. In other cases, specific terms or conditions may be applied to activities in the area. The oil and gas industry, as well as utility companies, indicated they would like to know in advance where stipulations are going to be required. In light of these concerns, we are proposing another issue: Areas of Special Public Interest (pg. 13).

In some parts of Booklet I, it was suggested that we be more positive in our approach, such as with wildlife habitat. We have attempted to correct this in the second booklet. Also, in addition to the four areas of primary concern for wildlife habitat, we have added Cooke's Peak and the Gila River. These are but a few of the changes you will notice on the following pages.



## Why Some Things Were Not Changed

Some suggested issues were not included because they are outside BLM's jurisdiction, are covered by previous plans, or can be better handled in other ways.

### Jurisdiction

The RMP cannot include items which are outside the authority or control of BLM. For example, several people had suggestions dealing exclusively with wildlife populations. The State Department of Game and Fish has responsibility for populations of wildlife whereas the BLM has responsibility for the habitat.

### Existing Plans

We have been doing long range land use planning for quite a few years. Many of the old decisions are still valid today. Valid decisions that were made previously will not need new analysis unless significant new information comes to light or a change in circumstances shows a need to reevaluate some aspect of the decision. The subject of city expansion is one example. The decisions from the previous plans (this includes the recently studied Southern Rio Grande Management Framework Plan) will not need to be revised until the original solutions are outgrown or outdated.

A number of people commented on the fact that oil and gas were the only items mentioned in the energy minerals issue. Many suggested the addition of geothermal energy. As mentioned above, if there is a valid decision on the subject, it will not need to be reevaluated in the RMP. Decisions concerning geothermal leasing, which include much of Las Cruces/Lordsburg area, have been made as a result of previous Environmental Assessments.

### Standard Procedures

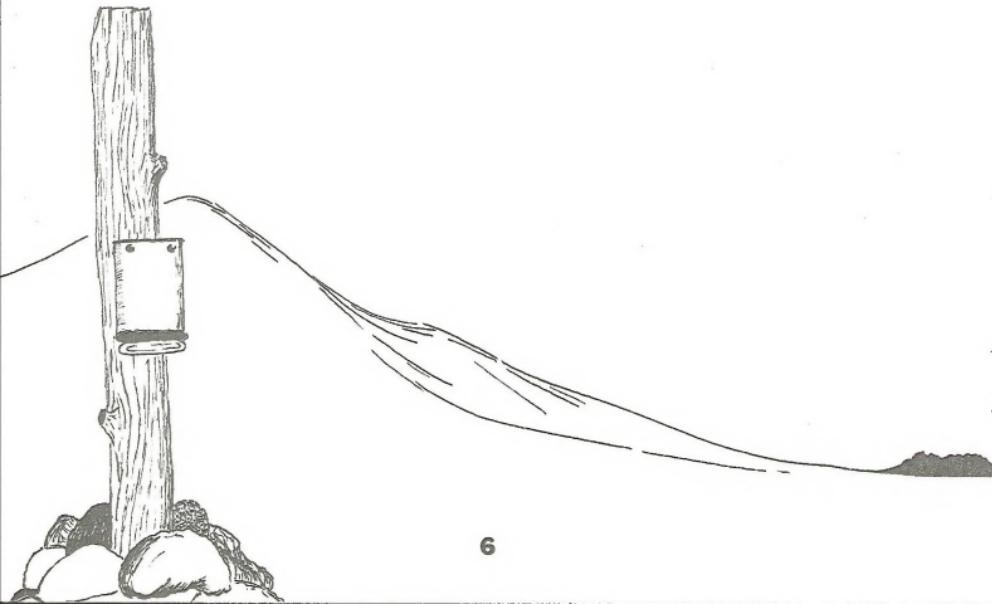
When a person or group applies for a site-specific use or permit, BLM's response is guided by the above mentioned plans as well as policy and regulations. Standard procedures are followed with the customary protection stipulations. Animal damage control (ADC), for instance, originates with a written request and areas of control are evaluated annually. BLM can better respond to each request on a case-by-case basis, rather than through a 4 year plan.

Even when the action is more involved, such as a large scale mining operation, it can often be handled on a case-by-case basis. A plan of operations is submitted, and a more detailed environmental assessment is required; therefore, it does not need to be considered in the RMP.

## Why Some Thing Were Not Changed (continued)

The upcoming RMP will incorporate all the previous plans and decisions and discuss new long range plans for matters which have not been satisfactorily resolved. All plans must conform with applicable laws and regulations, which become mandatory criteria for each of the issues. We must:

1. Use and observe the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. Consider present and potential combinations of uses and weigh long-term benefits against short-term gains.
2. Study the impact on other resources. Protect fragile resources (e.g. Cultural Resources, Threatened or Endangered Plants and Animals, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern) and prevent irreversible harm. Take into account the relative scarcity of resources (e.g. Energy and Critical Minerals) involved and the availability of alternative methods or locations.
3. Be as consistent as practical with the policies, plans, and programs of other Federal agencies and local, state, and tribal governments. Consider local and regional social values, economics, and conditions and needs. Consider the impact on neighboring non-federal lands.
4. Be within the required timeframes and budgetary limits.



## ISSUES AND PLANNING CRITERIA

### Issue 1: Rangeland Management \*

Rangeland management, including livestock grazing, wildlife, and watershed, is a major concern throughout the Planning Area and will be considered as a part of this planning process. As a result of public input, not only associated with this effort but from other sources, a revised approach to grazing management is currently being formalized. Based on resource, economic, and social conditions, allotments would be placed in selective management categories. This management approach should help to address the legal requirements of the program, as well as focus on more specific conditions.

#### Criteria:

##### What are we trying to do?

- A. Provide adequate forage for existing grazing preference and native populations of big game animals (antelope, deer, bighorn, javelina).
- B. Reduce soil erosion and enhance basic watershed resources.
- C. Improve range conditions and maintain a static or upward range trend.
- D. Establish priorities for investment of available funds and management capabilities based on existing conditions as well as present and future technology.

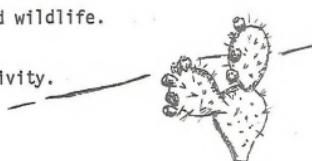
##### What or who may be affected by our actions on this issue?

- E. Local and regional lifestyles, values, and beliefs.
- F. Local, regional, and national economies.
- G. Ranch operators and hunters.
- H. Water quality and flood and sediment damage.
- I. Scenic quality.
- J. Cultural resources.
- K. Existing grazing use patterns and grazing systems.
- L. Wildlife habitat.
- M. Plant communities.

##### What information do we need?

- N. The proper management category for each allotment based on items below.
- O. Where rangeland treatments will improve range condition or result in an upward trend.
- P. Where a change in grazing systems will improve range conditions.
- Q. Actual use, degree of utilization and utilization patterns.
- R. Current range condition and apparent trend.
- S. Existing range improvements.
- T. Precipitation patterns.
- U. Present and projected water needs for livestock and wildlife.
- W. Social and economic conditions and trends.
- X. Stipulations needed for environmental protection.
- Y. Relationship between present and potential productivity.

\*Formerly Vegetation Allocation Issue



## Issue 2: Public Access

The issue of public access is concerned with the areas of public land having significant resource or recreation value for which there is high demand and no legal public access. This management concern is of planning significance area wide.

Criteria:

What are we trying to do?

- A. Provide legal public access to those areas of public land having significant resource values or for which there is a high demand.

What or who may be affected by our actions on this issue?

- B. Local and regional values and beliefs, lifestyles.
- C. Local and regional economies.
- D. Air quality.
- E. Watershed.
- F. Safety hazards.
- G. Scenic quality and open space.
- H. Cultural resources.
- I. Use patterns.
- J. Wildlife habitat.
- K. Plant communities.

What information do we need?

- L. Areas of public land with significant resource values.
- M. Areas of public land for which there is a high demand.
- N. Opportunities to consolidate access.
- O. Location and condition of existing access.
- P. Existing uses.
- Q. Hazard conditions.
- R. Areas where vehicle traffic is excluded.
- S. Social and economic trends.

### Issue 3: Management Of Wildlife Habitat

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) manages the animal population while the BLM manages the habitat of the animals. Providing favorable habitat conditions for native wildlife populations will be a major consideration with priority going to big game, upland game (e.g. quail, dove, etc.), birds of prey, and waterfowl. The areas of greatest concern are the Gila River, Cooke's Peak, and Florida, Big Hatchet, Alamo Hueco, and Southern Peloncillo Mountains. This issue is closely related to the Rangeland Management issue, but is different in that it is from an overall wildlife management perspective. Emphasis is on coordination with the NMDGF plans and wildlife habitat factors such as wildlife waters, predation, spring forbs, cover, browse, fawning, lambing, nesting sites, etc.

Criteria:

What are we trying to do?

- A. Increase habitat diversity.
- B. Provide habitat conditions to adequately maintain existing native populations.
- C. Give priority to the habitat of big game, upland game, birds of prey, and waterfowl.

What and who may be affected by our actions on this issue?

- D. Social values and beliefs.
- E. Local, regional, and State economies.
- F. Watershed.
- G. Scenic quality.
- H. Plant communities.
- I. Cultural resources.
- J. Water quantity and quality.
- K. Existing range improvements.
- L. Existing uses.

What information do we need?

- M. NMDGF plans for native big game transplants.
- N. Areas which have the best chance of improving by a change in management practices.
- O. Water distribution and existing range improvements for wildlife.
- P. Range condition and apparent trend.
- Q. Soils and precipitation.
- R. Other resource uses.
- S. Visitor use.
- T. Big game populations and population index for small species.
- U. Social and economic conditions.
- W. Special habitat features.



## Issue 4: Off-Road Vehicle Designation

Executive Order requires the designation of all public lands as "open", "closed", or "limited" to off-road vehicle (ORV) use. ORV designation is an issue throughout the Planning Area. Many recreationists desire to use public land because private and state lands are usually closed to ORV activities. Since designations apply to all user groups, ORV designation may limit access by restricting cross-country travel.

Criteria:

What are we trying to do?

- A. Designate all lands open to ORV use where compatible with existing resources.
- B. Use restrictions to protect resources, promote safety, and minimize conflicts between various uses on public land.

What and who may be affected by our actions on this issue?

- C. Social values and beliefs.
- D. Local and regional economies.
- E. Existing uses.
- F. Watershed and soils.
- G. Existing improvements.
- H. Hazardous areas.
- I. Wildlife habitat.
- J. Plant communities.
- K. Cultural resources.

What information do we need?

- L. Lands which are suitable for open designation to provide for recreational use or for access.
- M. Lands which need limitations or closure to protect fragile resources.
- N. Existing improvements, current uses, and hazardous conditions.
- O. Threatened or endangered plants and animals.
- P. Other sensitive plants and animals.
- Q. Visual resource management classes.
- R. Existing legal and physical access.
- S. Areas with special protective designations.
- T. Soils highly susceptible to compaction and erosion.
- U. Social and economic conditions and trends.

## Issue 5: Wilderness Recommendations

To carry out the wilderness mandate of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, each Wilderness Study Area (WSA) will be studied through the planning process. The end result of the wilderness studies will be recommendations to Congress (through the Secretary of the Interior) on the suitability or nonsuitability of the 15 WSAs for designation as wilderness.

All possible combinations of uses (e.g., grazing, wildlife, mineral development, wilderness) will be evaluated.

Criteria:

What are we trying to do?

- A. Determine which areas are unsuitable for wilderness designation.
- B. Determine which areas are suitable for wilderness designation.

What or who may be affected by our actions on this issue?

- C. Local, regional, and national values and beliefs.
- D. Local, regional, and national economies.
- E. Existing and future uses.
- F. Existing improvements.
- G. Open space and scenic quality.
- H. Watershed.
- I. Cultural resources.
- J. Wilderness values.
- K. Wildlife habitat.
- L. Plant communities.

What information do we need?

- M. Resource uses which would be foregone with wilderness designation (e.g. Energy and Critical Minerals).
- N. Study areas which could be managed as wilderness in perpetuity.
- O. The quality of the study area with respect to the mandatory wilderness characteristics.
- P. Special features and supplemental values in WSAs.
- Q. Resource uses which would benefit from wilderness designation.
- R. Study areas which would add diversity to the National Wilderness Preservation System.
- S. Social and economic trends.

## Issue 6: Energy Minerals

Making energy mineral resources available is a high national priority. The intensity of the energy minerals issue (oil and gas) is high to the extent that other programs are affected. This subject, through planning, would afford the opportunity to resolve the foreseeable conflicts between alternative uses. The most significant conflicts appear to be located in Hidalgo County.

### Criteria:

#### What are we trying to do?

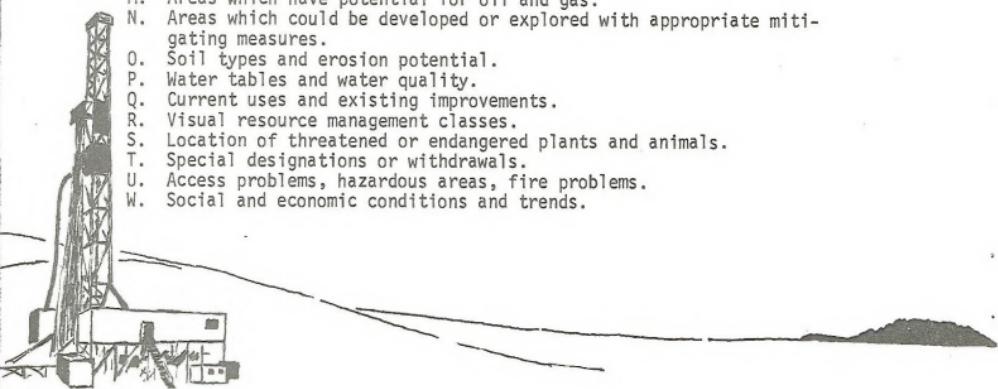
- A. Permit maximum exploration opportunities in the least restrictive manner possible.
- B. Lease all areas having potential for oil and gas and potential for development.

#### What or who may be affected by our actions on this issue?

- C. Social values and beliefs.
- D. Population distribution.
- E. Private surface over Federal sub-surface (split estates).
- F. Local, regional, and national economies.
- G. Air and water quality, noise levels, watershed resources.
- H. Cultural resources.
- I. Existing uses.
- J. Scenic quality.
- K. Wildlife habitat.
- L. Plant communities.

#### What information do we need?

- M. Areas which have potential for oil and gas.
- N. Areas which could be developed or explored with appropriate mitigating measures.
- O. Soil types and erosion potential.
- P. Water tables and water quality.
- Q. Current uses and existing improvements.
- R. Visual resource management classes.
- S. Location of threatened or endangered plants and animals.
- T. Special designations or withdrawals.
- U. Access problems, hazardous areas, fire problems.
- W. Social and economic conditions and trends.



## Issue 7: Areas Of Special Public Interest

BLM has several ways of tailoring management practices to meet the unique needs of specific areas. Although no one site has the magnitude of an issue, taken together they may have a considerable impact on future management options. The end result will be the identification of areas of more than local interest or special worth.

Criteria:

What are we trying to do?

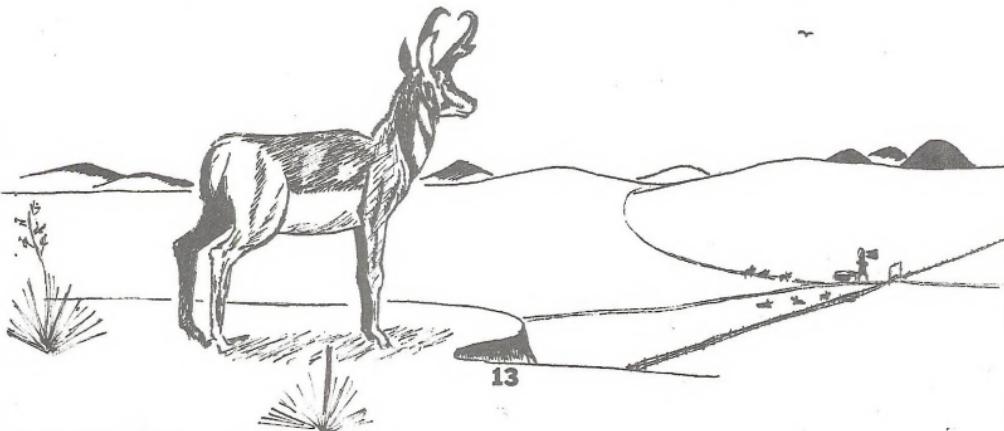
- A. Manage those areas that are hazardous or have unusual natural or historic value and more than local significance.

What or who may be affected by our actions on this issue?

- B. Local, regional, national values and beliefs.
- C. Local, regional, national economies.
- D. Economic interests, commodity users.
- E. Existing and future use patterns.
- F. Scenic, scientific, cultural, natural values.
- G. Plant communities.

What information do we need?

- H. Opportunities for special designations.
- I. Stipulations necessary to provide protection or opportunities.
- J. The names of site-specific areas that are of special interest to the public.



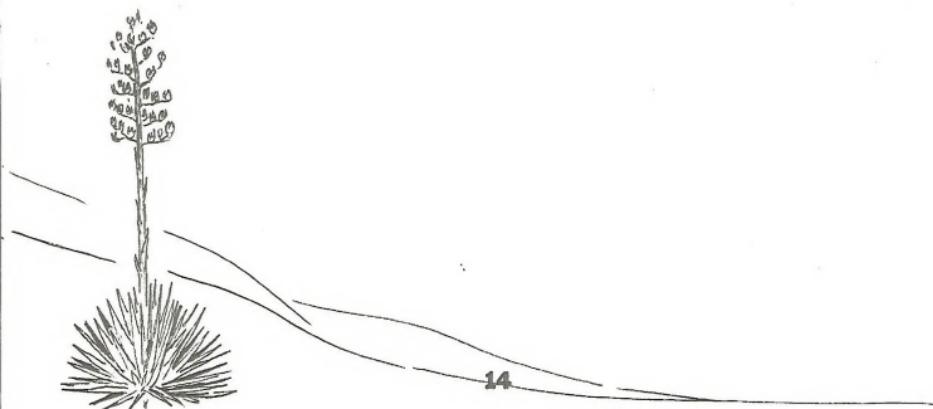
## SUMMARY

Over the next three years, we hope you will continue to participate in our efforts to discuss and analyze the following issues. You will notice that many of the activities are in direct conflict with one another. Through the planning process, we will try to resolve as many of the conflicts as possible.

The major issues are:

1. Rangeland management for livestock, wildlife and watershed and setting objectives for future management of selected allotments.
2. Ensuring access to public land having important resource or recreation values.
3. Maintenance or enhancement of important wildlife habitat areas with emphasis on big game.
4. Designation of areas closed, limited, or open for off-road vehicle use where appropriate.
5. Recommendation of suitability or nonsuitability for wilderness designation of the 15 Wilderness Study Areas.
6. Providing for orderly exploration and development of Energy Minerals while holding down the environmental impacts to a practical level.
7. Identification of management practices and/or protective measures necessary for specific areas of special public interest.

We would like to know whether you agree or disagree with our proposed final issues and criteria and to hear about anything you wish to add.



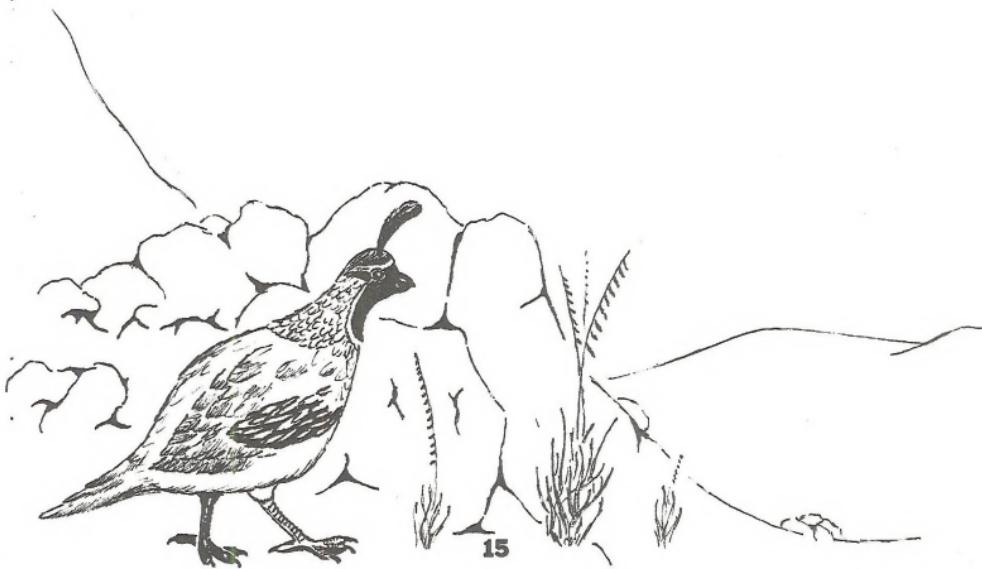
## HOW TO COMMENT

Fill in the comment sheets at the back of the booklet. Include as many additional sheets of paper as you wish. Fold the back cover in half with the comment sheets inside. Staple closed so the BLM address is on the outside. If you prefer to send a separate letter, mail your comments to Bureau of Land Management, Las Cruces District Office, P. O. Box 1420, Las Cruces, NM 88004.

If you would like to comment in person, come to our office at 1705 North Valley Drive in Las Cruces. No other public meetings are planned for this phase (issue identification and criteria development).

To be most useful, your comments should be received by August 15, 1981. If you are not interested in participating in this planning effort or do not wish to receive further information, please let us know and we will remove your name from our mailing list.

If you have any questions about the plan or need help with this booklet, please contact Bill Harkenrider, Las Cruces/Lordsburg Area Manager, at the above address or by telephone at (505) 523-5571.





Issue 1 - RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

Recommended changes

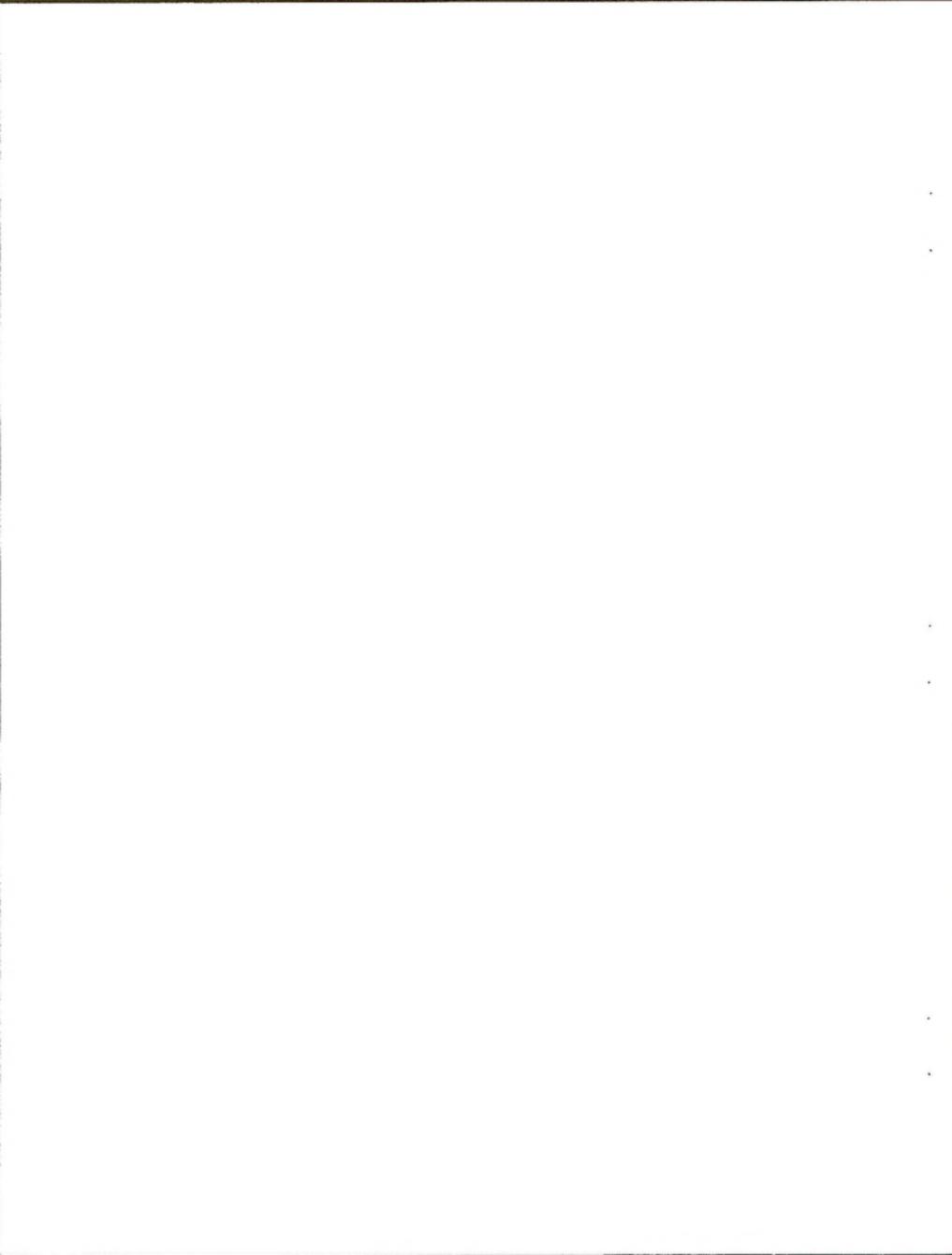
Reasons or additional comments

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Issue 2 - PUBLIC ACCESS

Recommended changes

Reasons or additional comments



Issue 3 - MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE HABITAT

Recommended changes

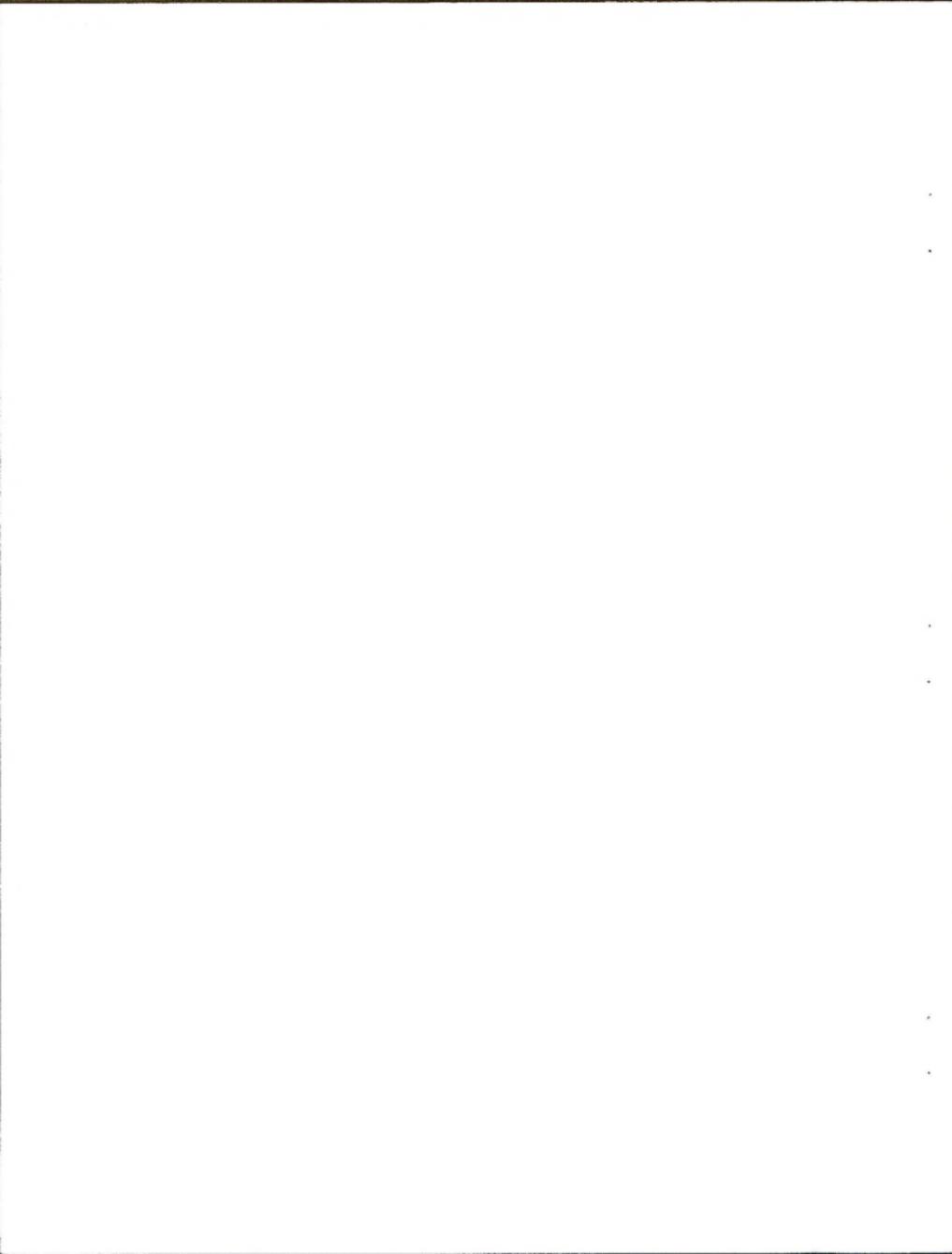
Reasons or additional comments

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Issue 4 - OFF-ROAD VEHICLE DESIGNATION

Recommended changes

Reasons or additional comments



Issue 5 - WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended changes

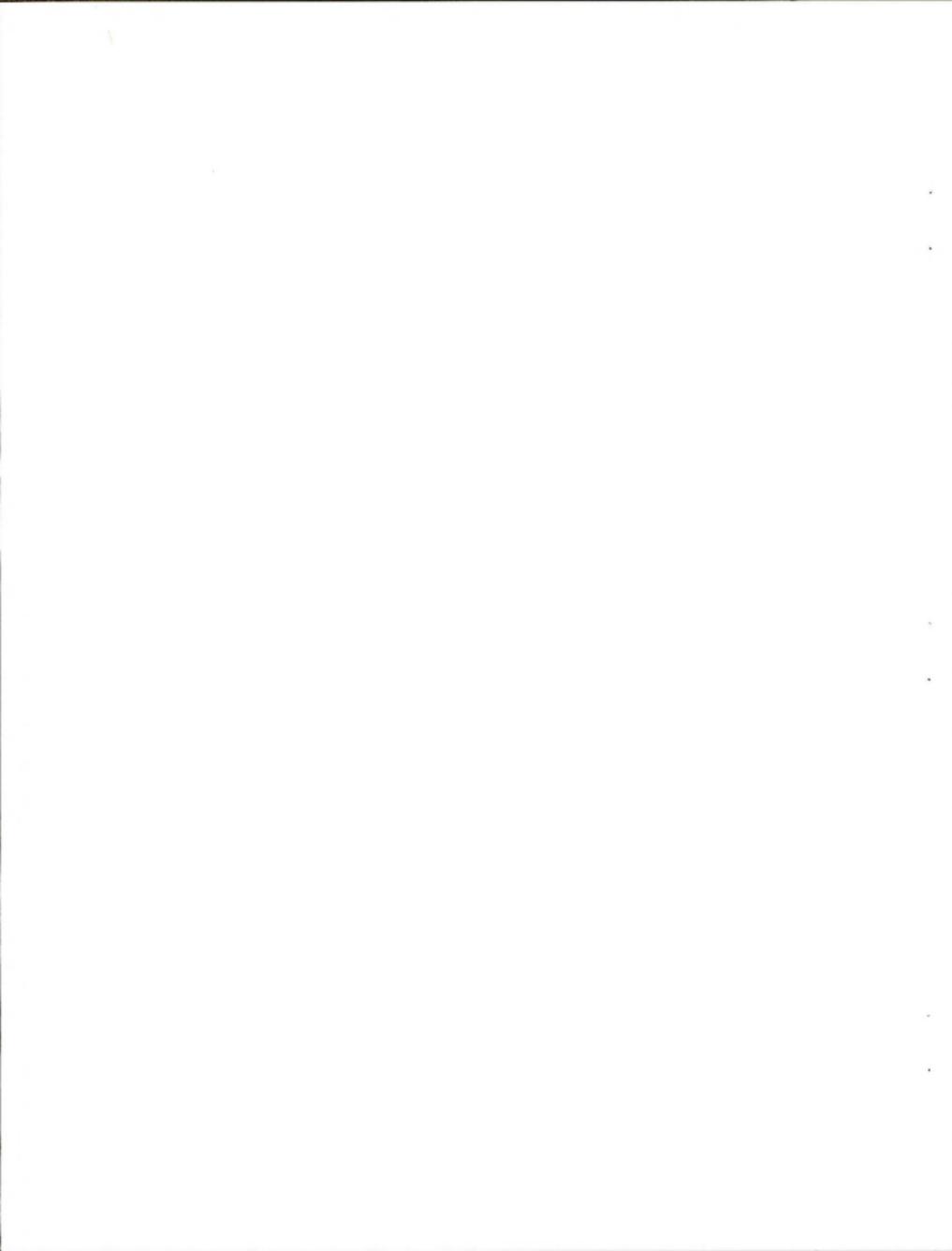
Reasons or additional comments

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Issue 6 - ENERGY MINERALS

Recommended changes

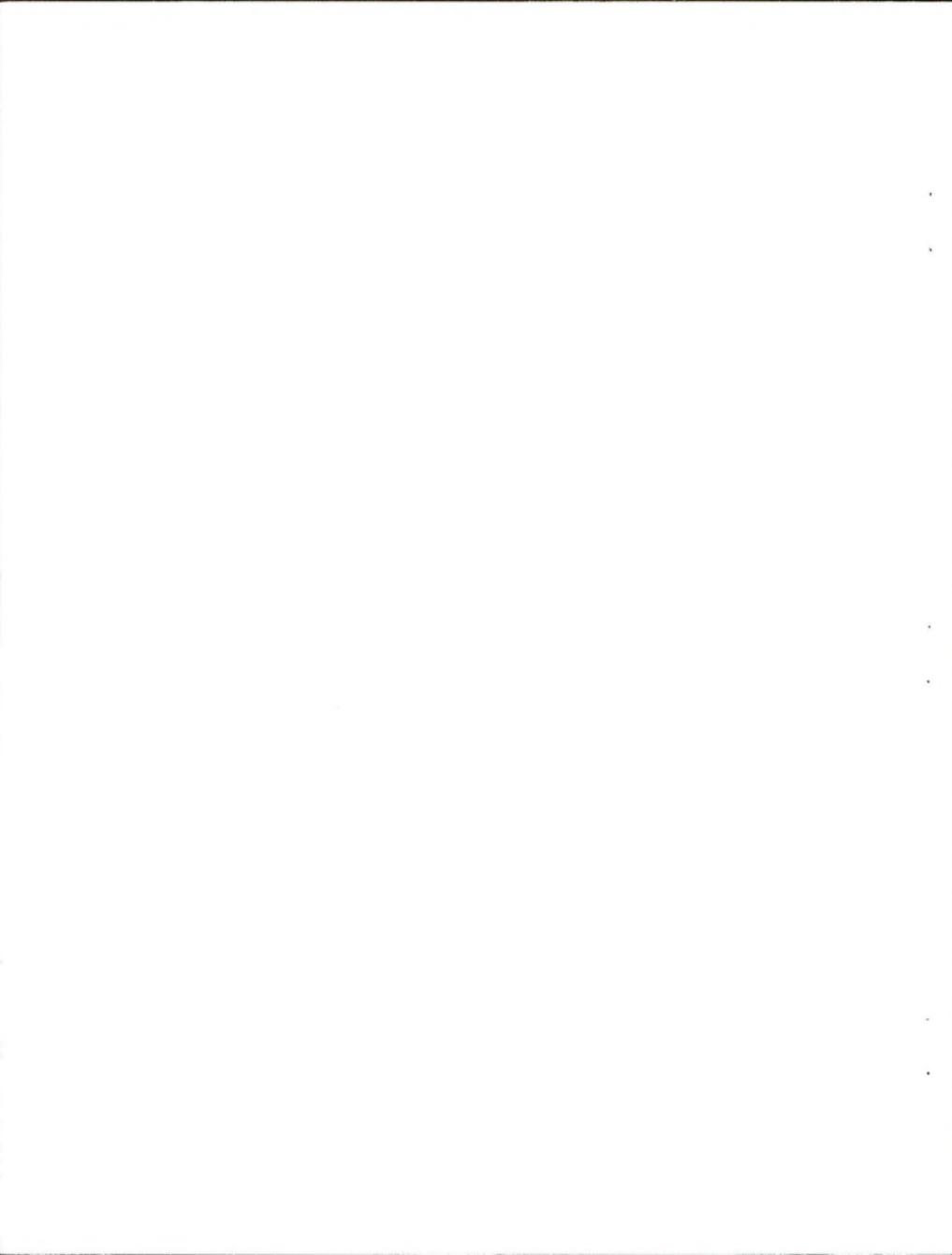
Reasons or additional comments

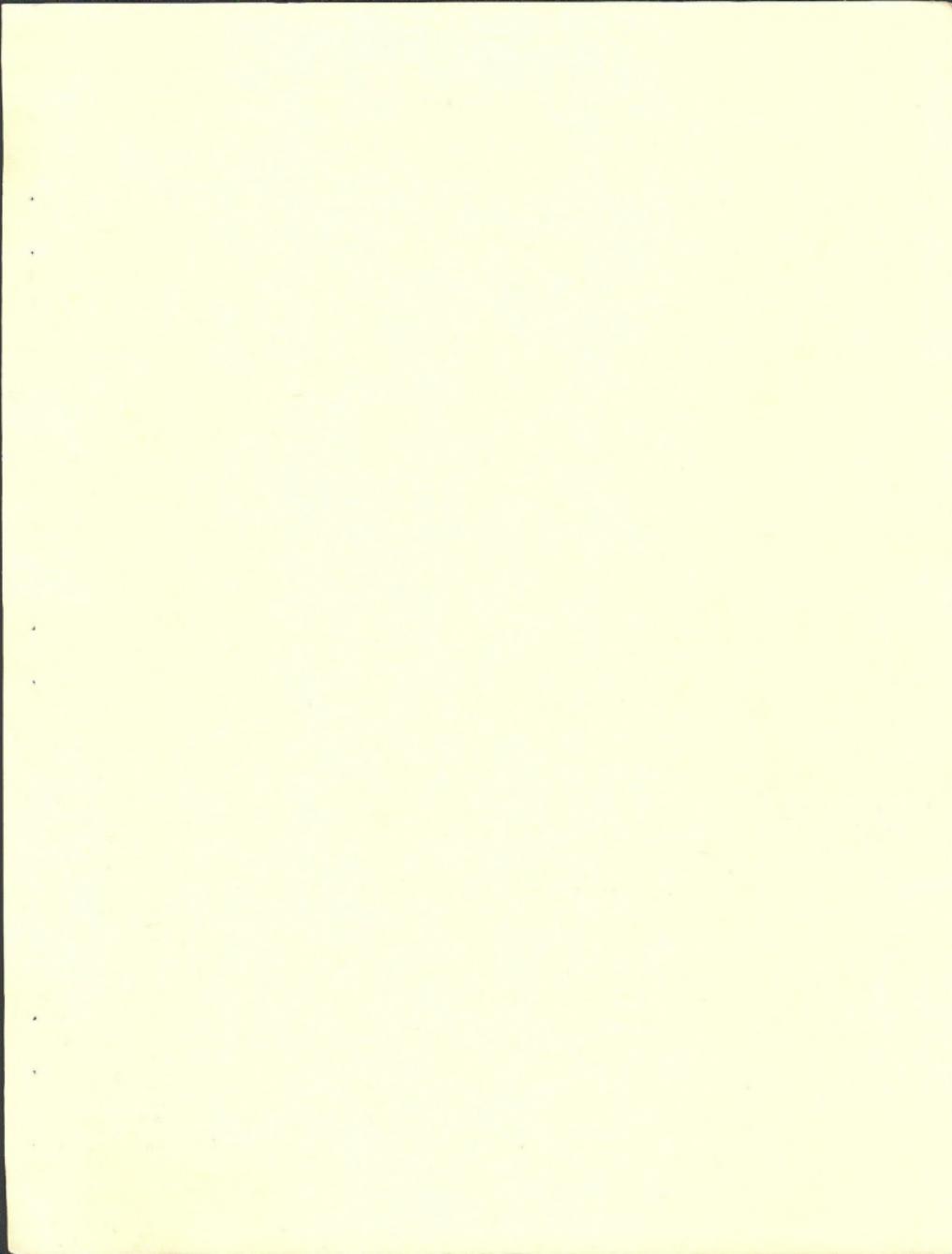


Issue 7 - AREAS OF SPECIAL PUBLIC INTEREST

Recommended changes

Reasons or additional comments





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